

VZCZCXRO8182
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHDH RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHGB #2748 2860657
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 130657Z OCT 09
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5048
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 002748

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/12/2019
TAGS: [KIRF](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: IRAQ'S REMAINING JEWS STAY HIDDEN

REF: 2008 BAGHDAD 1454

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor William Roebuck for Reasons 1
.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) On October 10, Poloff met with one of the last remaining Jews in Iraq, Khalida Fouad Liahua Moualim (strictly protect), to discuss the current state of the Iraqi Jewish community. Moualim stated that there are now eight remaining members of the Iraqi Jewish community in Baghdad including herself (a complete biographical breakdown of the community is contained in refTel). She stated that the community had numbered 20 persons in 2003, but that the number has declined as a result of old age, immigration, and sectarian violence. Moualim noted that her mother, Violet Shaul Touayik, had passed away in the past year and that her husband had been kidnapped by AQI in 2005 and had most likely been murdered. (Note: Since the kidnapping, the Embassy's Office of Hostage Affairs has attempted to assist Moualim in locating her husband or his remains. End note.) For her own part, Moualim expressed continued interest in immigrating to the Netherlands where two of her brothers are currently living. At present, Moualim works as a dentist in an orphanage and conceals her religious identity to her co-workers by claiming to be Christian, although she attends weekly Jewish services held at the Embassy.

¶2. (C) Asked about the community's religious sites, Moualim stated that there was a synagogue and a Jewish cemetery in Baghdad that had remained closed since 2004 with the keys entrusted to two separate Muslim families. She believed that the synagogue remained in good condition and noted that the Jewish community is able to pay the caretakers of the synagogue and cemetery a modest stipend from the rental income that they receive from their commercial properties. Moualim was not as optimistic about the Jewish synagogue located in Basra, which has been turned into a local warehouse. She also noted that the community had a strong interest in the grave of Ezekiel, which has become a religious site for Muslims as well. Asked about the possibility for Iraqi Jews living abroad to visit the country or attempt to reestablish connections, Moualim was pessimistic saying that latent anti-Semitism within Iraqi society would prevent this from happening anytime soon.

HILL